



"ONE TO-DAY IS WORTH TWO TO-MORROWS."

"WHY do you not start at once, Frederick? There's time enough. There's a train leaves in about three hours; and you would reach Liverpool in time to see Mr. L—the first thing to-morrow morning, and settle the matter out of hand. Take my advice: go home directly, put up the few things you want for your journey; come back again; take an omnibus to the station, and your ticket for Liverpool; and there you are." The young man spoke with amazing energy, in giving this advice: he was quite warm and animated—unnecessarily so, his friend evidently thought.

"Why, bless me, John, how you do run on! To Liverpool to day? Why, 'tis pretty near noon now. There, hark! there go the three-quarters by St. Paul's."

"The greater reason why you should make haste, Fred. And if you do, I tell you there is time enough. Look; here is the time table. The train, you see—the train that would do capitally for you—leaves, as I told you, in something more than three hours' time, and gets to Liverpool,—ah—yes—ah—in plenty of time for you to snatch a few hours' sleep, and then on to Mr. L——'s office the first thing to-morrow morning; and so you will get the first chance."

"My dear fellow, you quite bewilder me with your eagerness, and wild way of talking about starting off at once, as though it was such an easy matter to take a journey of a couple of hundred miles at an hour's notice. Goodness, John! Why won't to-morrow do as well as to-day?"

"Because 'one to-day is worth two to-morrows,'" responded the bustling friend.

"Pooh! that is one of your musty proverbs, John," said the other youth. "Why, one might almost fancy that you wanted to get rid of me."

"You know better than that, Fred. But—answer me one question—Don't you want to obtain this situation?" He laid his finger on an open letter which lay between him and his friend.

"Why, you know I do. That is, you know I want some employment badly enough. It is no pleasant thing for a fellow to be knocking about London, or anywhere else, week after week, with nothing to do, and wasting what little capital he has got in idleness. You know that, John," said Frederick S——, almost reproachfully.

"Well; and here is employment open to you—that is, if you make speed about it. But you see what Mr. L—— says in this letter—that the berth must be filled up at once—that there are several applicants for it—that he cannot engage with you without first seeing you—that he will pay your expenses to Liverpool—but that he must see you on the fifth of the month, before noon, at the latest."

"Yes, yes, yes, yes," said Fred, impatiently; "I know all that very well. And I know that I only had that letter this morning, and that this is the fourth of the month, and—in short—that it can't be done."

"But it can be done, Fred. I have shown you that it can be done; only time is going, going, going. There are five minutes gone already."

"Let them go. The idea! See how it rains, John."

"Nonsense, rain! only a passing shower; and if it does rain, you can take a bus, or a cab, and get home in half an hour; take another half-hour for packing up your traps; another for getting back into the City; then you will have an hour and a half for getting to the station yonder, rain or no rain."

"It won't take an hour and a half," said Fred.

"So much the better," said John; "'tis always a good plan to have a few minutes to spare in going by a railway train; but that shows how it can be done, and easily."

"Easily! yes, if I had nothing more to do than you talk about. Easily! yes, it is uncommon easy to talk, John; I admit that."

"And easy to do when you set about it in earnest, Fred. At any rate, it will be as easy for you to go to Liverpool to day, as it will be to-morrow. If you don't think it worth while to go at all, why, that is a different matter, and another question," added John.

"There you go: you don't give a fellow time to say a word or look about him," rejoined Fred, almost angrily.

"You know, John, that it is worth my while to go; and that I mean going. All I say is, and I stick to it, that I don't like being hurried in this way. I wonder at you, John, why can't you give one a bit of encouragement the other way? 'Tis just like you."

"There, now you are angry with me, Fred; and you must know, my dear fellow, that it is without occasion. It is not I who hurry you, but this letter. Only read it again; and what does it say? Why, that you must be at Mr. L——'s office before noon on the fifth—that is to-morrow; and you know very well, that to do this, you ought to go to day, if not this afternoon, by the night train; but I should recommend this afternoon, this very day, Fred. But you must make up your mind quick: there are another five minutes gone."

The reader is to suppose this dialogue or consultation to have taken place in a coffee-room, in the neighbourhood of Paternoster Row. The speakers were seated at a table, with some slight refection before them, which might have passed either as a luncheon, or an early and

light dinner. It was evident, however, that they had met rather for the convenience of this short conference than for the indulgence of appetite; for the food on their plates had, to this time, remained almost untouched: now, however, they employed a few minutes in the business of the table.

They were young men, as we have said; and it may be added that they were young men of good character and average abilities; also that they were closely connected, not only by relationship, but by friendship. Hence the familiarity of their conversation.

In personal appearance there was little to choose between the two young men perhaps: and yet a keen observer might have remarked (what the scrap of conversation set down would have confirmed) that there were signs and tokens of quick decision manifested by one of the speakers, which were wanting in his friend. Perhaps it was this want of firmness, or setness of purpose, which had so operated against the interests of Frederick S——, as to throw him out, and keep him out, of employment. At all events he had been “knocking about London,” as he expressed it, several weeks, and seeking for a situation without success, when the exertions and influence of his friend had procured for him the offer of a lucrative position in a merchant's office at Liverpool, subject to the conditions already hinted at. We return, from this short discussion, to the *fag end* of the consultation.

“There's twelve o'clock striking,” said John; “and I must be back to business. Have you made up your mind, Fred?”

“Well, yes, I suppose it will be better to do as you say. It is hurrying work, though.”

“And every minute you lose now will make it more hurrying; so, I won't keep you talking any longer. I am glad you have determined to take time by the forelock. And now, good-bye. Only get to Mr. L——'s office in good time, and I think I can answer for your success. You will do well there, no fear. I am only sorry we shall be so far apart, but that can't be helped. Once more, good-bye.”

So the friends shook hands and parted; John hastening to his house of business, and Frederick walking, not so rapidly, in an opposite direction towards his lodgings.

“John is a good fellow,” soliloquized Frederick; “but

he is so uncommonly fidgetty that it makes one nervous to be in his company. He is quite irritating. However, I must say there is some sense in his advice this time, and I had better take it; and so—”

“You are the very person I was wishing to see, S——. How fortunate I should meet with you.” This, accompanied by a cordial grasp of the hand, brought Frederick’s soliloquy to a sudden close, and himself to a stand-still. He had fallen in with another friend.

“I am glad to meet you, Greene: only, you see, I—am rather in a hurry.”

“I am sorry for that. I am just going to that exhibition of pictures; and I have an extra ticket. You were saying last week, you know, that you wished to go.”

“You don’t mean that you have procured a ticket on purpose?”

“Yes. Cannot you come?”

“I am extremely sorry: it is dreadfully unfortunate. But—the truth is—I am intending to start for Liverpool this afternoon.”

“Nonsense!”

“It is true, though. Just read this letter.” And Frederick put the letter into his friend Greene’s hand.

“Pooh! you cannot get down to Liverpool to day,” said Greene, when he had glanced over the note.

“Yes, I can—at least, I suppose so, if I don’t waste time.” Frederick was wasting time then; but he did not think of that. “The train does not start till three o’clock,” he added.

“But this is not the way to the station. You are not going there now, are you?”

“No, no; I have to get to my lodgings first, to put a few things together; and then, I’m off.”

“You’ll never do it, Fred. It is very nearly half-past twelve now.”

“Yes, I think I can manage it; only a fellow doesn’t like to be hurried so.”

“Well, what need to be in such a bustle? You may as well go with me to the exhibition, and then take the night train. You will get to Liverpool time enough then; and you can sleep as you travel.”

“That’s what I told John Usher: I said I could go by the night train; but he would not hear of it. He is so dreadfully fidgetty, you know.”

"Oh, he! Well, what do you say, S——?"

"That I think I'll take your advice. In fact, it is almost too late now for the three o'clock train; and I hate being hustled about. Yes, I'll go with you, Greene."

* * * *

Frederick S—— was a young man of cultivated taste, though only a merchant's clerk; and time passed away rapidly and pleasantly at the exhibition. Once or twice an uneasy reflection flitted across his mind that he might perhaps have to pay dear for his afternoon's enjoyment. But he quieted himself with the thought that it would all come right in the end; and his friend Greene laughed at his anxieties.

"You had better go home and spend the evening with me, S——," said Greene, when, late in the afternoon, they found themselves once more in the street.

"No, no, thank you. I really must be getting ready for my journey, now."

"You are quite ridiculous about this journey, S——," said Greene, laughing. "Why, there is time enough and to spare. You have only to get to your lodgings by nine o'clock; pack up for this precious journey; then to the station; and——"

"Well, well, we may as well spend this last evening of mine in London together. It will be very dull at my lodgings alone."

"To be sure it will: so here we go."

"I expect John Usher would look rather grave if he were to meet us though," said Frederick, rather self-reproachfully.

"Usher! Nonsense! He won't see us: and if he should, you are not in leading strings I should hope."

"No, I should hope not indeed," said Frederick, proudly, as he took Greene's arm.

* * * *

"You are too late, sir. Too late by several hours, as you see." And Mr. L——, as he said this, pointed significantly to the clock in his office, whose hands pointed to four.

"I am very sorry, sir," said Frederick S——; and indeed he looked very sorry.

"Well, I regret it too, if you do, Mr. S——," replied Mr. L——, kindly. "But my note would have explained to you that unless you made your appearance here by to-

day noon, I should consider the situation declined, and should be at liberty to fill it up otherwise. You were not here; and in justice to other applicants on the spot, as well as to save the inconvenience of further delay in my business, I have filled up the vacancy."

"Have you no other vacancy, sir?" asked Frederick, humbly.

"I have no other," said the merchant.

"I only received your letter yesterday morning, in London, sir," pleaded S——.

"True; there was a little delay of one post. But that gave you time, surely."

"I was just too late for the night train, sir; and so had to wait for the first train this morning," said Frederick. He did not say anything about the three o'clock afternoon train.

"It is very much to be regretted—very much indeed; and I can only say that it is through no fault of mine that you have had a lost journey. But you see, Mr. S——, you should not have been too late."

Frederick's conscience told him that it was his own fault that he was too late. He had spent so pleasant an evening with his friend Greene, that he had overstayed the hour of breaking up. Then he had been delayed at his lodgings; then—in short, and without entering into particulars, he reached the railway terminus in the suburbs just five minutes after the train had started.

"Punctuality, sir," continued the merchant, "is with me a *sine quâ non*. A man that is not punctual is never to be depended on. The best qualities without punctuality are valueless, or next to valueless. I am sorry, for your sake, young man, that through want of punctuality you have lost the situation, since you appear to have set your mind on it. But it will be a lesson to you for life. If you had started off at once, and not deferred your journey to the very last train, or even if you had taken care to be in time for that, the disappointment would not have occurred. Never put off till to-morrow what should be done to day, Mr. S——. Always act upon that wise maxim in future; and the present disappointment will have done you good."

* * * * *

"John Usher was right, after all," said Frederick, with a sigh, as, heavy-hearted, he paced the busy streets of Liver-

pool, on his way back to his inn. "He said that 'One to-day is worth two to-morrows.' If I had only listened to him!"

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"One to-day is worth two to-morrows." "Never put off till to-morrow what should be done to-day." If these maxims be worth noting for time, surely they are yet more important as regards eternity. We are ready enough to blame the folly of a youth who, from a habit of procrastination, a spirit of indecision, a dislike to energetic action, and a love of present gratification, loses one opportunity after another of bettering his worldly condition, and advancing his temporal interests; but have we nothing to say in condemnation of those who loiter away their souls' day of opportunity, and defer the infinite concerns of an eternal world—its everlasting interests, to a problematical and uncertain to-morrow?

The errors of time may be remedied by renewed application: the disappointments of a day may teach us wisdom for to-morrow. And, at the worst, our shortcomings here affect us only for a little while. Our life is but as a vapour, which soon vanishes away. But a soul ruined and lost by negligence of the means of salvation, and by delay in seeking it, is for ever ruined and lost; and, "What is a man profited, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" *

To you, then, we appeal, who having hitherto disregarded the appeals of Heaven, "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts;" † and the admonitions of friends, and the pricks of conscience: and once more we invite and adjure you, by all the uncertainties of life, by the glories of eternal salvation, by the miseries of the lost, by the bleeding wounds of a compassionate Saviour, by the gentle and yet urgent invitations of the gospel, by its solemn warnings, to "seek the Lord while he may be found, and to call upon him while he is near;" ‡ because "now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." §

"Oh do not let the word depart,

Nor close thine ears in weak delay:

Poor sinner, harden not thine heart;

Thou would'st be saved—*Why not to-day?*

* Matt. xvi. 26.

† Isa. lv. 6.

‡ Psa. xciv. 7. Heb. iii. 15.

§ 2 Cor. vi. 2.

"To-morrow's sun may never rise,
 To bless thee with its opening ray;
 This is the time; oh then be wise,
 Thou would'st be saved—*Why not to-day?*"

"Our God, in pity, lingers still;
 And wilt thou thus his love repay?
 Renounce at length thy stubborn will,
 Thou would'st be saved—*Why not to-day?*"

A SECRET WORTH KNOWING.

I NEVER knew a happier man than John Hawson, yet he was only a poor hard-working man, whose wages scarcely exceeded sixteen shillings a week, and out of that, when bread was not so cheap as it is now, he had to support a family of six children. He lived in a large town in Yorkshire where the woollen trade is carried on, and he was what is called a handle-setter. Woollen cloth, we may explain, is dressed by means of teasles, which are fitted into frames consisting of parallel iron rods, which, when filled, are put on cylinders, over which as they revolve the cloth passes. It was John Hawson's work to fit the teasles into the frames. John was a good singer; and many a time as I have passed the shop where he worked have I heard him singing cheerily, but always something good; a verse of a psalm or hymn, and that most commonly of a joyful order. A few of good old Dr. Watts's were his special favourites, such as, "Come let us join our cheerful songs." "My God, the spring of all my joys." "Come, we that love the Lord, and let our joys be known." It was quite surprising to hear him sing the concluding verse of the one last mentioned, which he always did in a voice more than usually hearty and full:

"Then let our songs abound,
 And every tear be dry;
 We're marching through Immanuel's ground,
 To fairer worlds on high."

Two or three of his shopmates were likeminded with himself, and joined him in his singing, and the rest made no objection, because the singing itself was cheerful, and because John was always so genial and kind.

One Monday morning a fresh "hand," Joe Sugden, took his place in the shop. Everything was new to Joe. His

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